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OPEDA Newsletter

ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES OF THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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OPEDA'S ELECTED OFFICERS

MAY 1956 TO MAY 1958



ERWIN L. LECLERC, Vice-President



CHARLES E. BURKHEAD, President



DOROTHY MARTIN, Secretary-Treasurer

Dr. LeClerc, re-elected vice-president, is Chief of Biometrical Services, ARS. He began his career in USDA as a Jr. Plant Pathologist in 1924 and except for 5 yrs. with the Colo. Agric. Experiment Sta. and 2 yrs. with Budget Bureau has been in the Dept. since. Holds B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Colo. A&M College, Iowa State College and Univ. of Minn., respectively. Member of OPEDA since '49 and has added many recruits for OPEDA.

Mr. Burkhead is Chief of Field Crop Statistics Branch of AMS. A native of Tenn., he taught in country schools for 4 yrs. Graduate of Okla. City U. Started in USDA in 1929 with Weather Bureau at Raleigh, N.C.; then in several field offices of crop reporting services and in Washington since 1943; in present position since 1946. Has been a member of OPEDA "off and on" since 1930 and consistently since 1946. Was membership chairman when elected to presidency.

Miss Martin is a news writer in Div. of Info. & Education Forest Service. A former school teacher, she started in FS as a lookout on White Mountain Natl. Forest; then in regional office of FS at Philadelphia, and in present position since 1948. Joined OPEDA in Dec. '53 and active ever since. Is hostess at monthly luncheons in D.C. Handled ticket sales for Cliff Hope dinner; has been of much help in editing Newsletters.

NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OPEDA members elected to serve with the three officers for the next two years: Daniel A. Currie (CEA), C.B. Gilliland (AMS), Cannon C. Hearne (FAS), Charles A. Logan (ARS), Glenn K. Rule (SCS), and T. Roy Reid, Grad. School. Chris Henderson, immediate past president, is an ex officio member. In accordance with the Constitution, this group will "carry on the work of the Organization subject to the instructions of the Council."

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REORGANIZED

Hugh A. Brown (SCS), Chairman, and other members -- Frances Debnam (ARS); Dennett Guthrie (FAS); W.S. Harris (CSS); Lance Hooks (AMS); W.J. Krebs (ARS); Sterling Landess (FHA); Roland Rotty (FS); and Jos. Weeks (ACPS) -- met on June 28 and laid out plans for an all-out membership drive to start in October.
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

An individual acting alone has difficulty making effective demands for his personal welfare. One reason for the existence of OPEDA is to furnish a dignified means of unified group action for USDA employees in the professional grades. Organized in 1929, it includes employees in all our agencies in Washington and in the field and a number in foreign posts. Paid-up membership is over 3500. Our new membership chairman, Hugh Brown (SCS) hopes to make it 8,000 in a few years. Let us all pledge our support in helping to make his hopes become reality. Each member can do his bit by mentioning OPEDA and its objectives to co-workers (see back of your membership card). Nothing beats personal contact in pushing ones organization. We must look chiefly to you folks in the field for increased membership as 8 out of 10 persons eligible to join are at field stations. Here's your opportunity to help OPEDA reach its goal. The larger our membership, the more effective our efforts and achievements. The officers elected in May, together with our capable executive officer, Dillard B. Lasseter, and his competent assistants, Mrs. Ida Lee Sliney and Miss Margaret Meehan, look forward to a fruitful future for OPEDA.

In accepting the presidency of OPEDA, I mentioned four things that should be stressed in the coming years: (1) increase membership as fast as possible; (2) push our committee work; (3) do the utmost to enhance the welfare of our professional people and at the same time maintain a high standard of public service; and (4) keep our membership informed of new developments through newsletters, forums, and other means. We want to use as many members as possible in some capacity -- on committees or in other ways. Chris Henderson, your president the past 2 years, believed in spreading the workload. By so doing he doubled membership during his term of office. It can be done again in the next 2 years.

But to be worthy of existence, OPEDA must do something for its people. Mr. Lasseter is in close touch with activities of Congress relative to your personal welfare. Our three standing committees are active in molding programs for Council consideration. The monthly luncheons in D.C. and Beltsville are a means of keeping up-to-date on employee legislation and other matters of interest. We hope local chapters can be formed in larger cities so our field members can get together in this manner. Let us hear from you field folks when you have questions or suggestions about OPEDA. And won't you all do your bit to make OPEDA more effective? -- Charles E. Burkhead, OPEDA President.

LATEST ON LEGISLATION

Dillard Lasseter, Executive Officer reports, as of June 29: S.2875 is now being considered by the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service Committee and, while some changes may be made in the House, they will probably affect only fringe benefits such as earlier retirement and disability retirement features. The body of the bill increasing annuities will likely be unchanged. Final approval of this omnibus retirement measure, however, is predicated upon the Administration's attitude -- that is, whether it will be vetoed or not....Executive Pay Raise bill is reportedly being held up in the Senate Committee awaiting decision of the Administration in regard to the Retirement legislation. If the Administration should veto the Retirement bill, the Executive Pay Raise Bill will probably die in committee. A separate and revised bill comprising the features of the vetoed S.1041 on Federal-State Retirement will be introduced early next week in the House by Congressman Jas. C. Davis of Ga. Fate of this bill will depend, as before, on Executive attitude toward it. We haven't been informed so far of any change in that attitude...The so-called Disaster-Health Insurance legislation for Federal employees has hit a snag and its passage in this Congress is doubtful....Legislation providing for outside training of Federal employees, which looked good a few weeks ago, is also in the very doubtful category.

"CLIFF" HOPE DINNER A SUCCESS

Highlight of the year for OPEDANS in Washington was the dinner honoring Congressman Hope (Kans.) on May 3, to whom tributes were paid by Under-Secy. Morse, Sen. Carlson, fellow-Kansan, and Dr. Stanley Fracker (ARS) who, on behalf of OPEDA, presented a plaque "in appreciation of Mr. Hope's services, both to agriculture and to the employees of the Department."

HERE AND THERE: At May and June luncheons, D.C. and Beltsville groups heard same speakers: Warren B. Irons, (CSC), on Health-Insurance Legislation in May; and in June Dr. Paul A. Siple, deputy to Admiral Richard E. Byrd, about his expeditions to Antarctica....OPEDA Members Receive Awards: Of 7 USDA employees who received Distinguished Service Awards on June 5, 4 were OPEDANS: M.R. Clarkson (ARS) and C.M. Ferguson (FES), of Washington; and E.L. Demmon (FS), Asheville, N.C., and Percy A. Wells (ARS), Wyndmoore, Pa. Thirty OPEDA members were recipients of Superior Service Awards; and 8 received Length of Service Awards....Dr. R.T. Cotton (AMS) will receive a National Civil Service League Career Service Award on July 2. He is a former recipient of a USDA Dist. Service Award....Thanks to OPEDA "go-getters" for new members during May and June: Ed Leker, (FES), O.F. Anderson and H.O. Pollock, (FAS), Geo. Montgomery, (FHA), Georgia; Geo. Potter (ARS), Louisiana; D.H. Wilson (ARS), Calif.; and W.E. Stone (ARS), Mexico....Three more agricultural attaches (FAS) joined our ranks: C.M. Elkinton, Brazil; F.R. Marti, Spain; D.L. MacDonald, Pakistan -- now 14 in all!...

LAST CALL: AFTER THIS ISSUE, '55 MEMBERS WHO HAVEN'T PAID '56 DUES WILL BE DROPPED!